THE HISTORY OF Sir Richard Whittington, THRICE Lord Mayor of LONDON.

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The History of Sir Richard Whittington.

CHAP. I.

Of Whittington's obscure Birth and hard Fortune and of his being drove to London.

ONE Richard Whittington, supposed to have been an outcast, for he did not know his pa-

rents, they either dying or leaving him to the parish of Taunton Dean in Somersetshire; but as he grew up, being displeased with the cruel usage of the nurse, he ran away from her at seven years of age, and travelled about the country, living upon the charity of well disposed persons, till he grew up to be a fine sturdy youth; when at last being threatened to be whipped if he continued in that idle course of life, he resolved to go to London, having heard that the streets were paved with gold. Not knowing the way, he followed the carrier; and at night for the little service he did them, in rubbing their horses, they gave him a supper. When he arrived in this famous city, the carrier supposing he would be a troublesome hanger on, told him plainly he must leave the inn, and immediately seek out some employment, giving him a groat.—With this he wandered about, but not knowing any one, and being in a tattered garb, some pitied him as a forlorn wretch, but few gave him any thing.

What he had got being soon spent, his stomach craved supply; but not having any thing to satisfy it, he resolved rather to starve than steal. — After two hungry days, and laying on the bulks at night, weary and faint, he got to a merchant's house in Leadenhall street, where he made many signs of his distressed condition, but the ill-natured cook was going to kick him from the door, saying, If you tarry here I will kick you into the kennel.—This put him almost into despair, so he laid him down on the ground, being unable to go any farther. In the mean time Mr. Fitz-Warren, whose house it was, came from the Royal Exchange, and seeing him there in that condition, demanded what he wanted? and sharply told him, If he did not immediately depart, he would cause him to be sent to the house of

Correction; calling him a lazy idle fellow. — On this he got up, and after falling two or three times through faintneſs for want of food, and making a bow, told him, he was a poor country fellow, in a ſtarving condition, and if that he might be put in a way, he would refuſe no labour, if it was only for his victuals. This raiſed a Chriſtian compaſſion in the merchant towards him, and then wanting a ſcullion he immediately ordered one of his ſervants to take him in, and give orders how he ſhould be employed. And ſo he was feaſted to his great refreſhment.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of Mrs. Alice putting him under the Cook, with her cruel Uſage to him, and Mrs. Alice's Interpoſition in his Favour.

THIS was the firſt ſtep of Providence to raiſe him to what in time made him to be the city's glory and the nation's wonder. But he meets with many difficulties; for the ſervants made ſport of him, and the ill-natured cook told him, You are to come under me, ſo look ſharp, clean the ſpits and the dripping-pan, make the fires, wind up the jack, and nimbly do all other ſcullery work that I may ſet you about, or elſe I will break your head with my ladle, and kick you about like a foot-ball.

This was cold comfort, but better than ſtarving, and what gave him a beam of hope was, Mrs. Alice, his Maſter's daughter, who hearing her father had entertained a new ſervant, came to ſee him, and ordered that he ſhould be kindly uſed. After ſhe had diſcourſed with him about his kindred and method of life, and found his anſwers ingenuous, ſhe ordered him ſome caſt off garments, and that he ſhould be cleaned, and appear like a ſervant in the houſe. Then ſhe went to her parents, and gave them her opinion of this ſtranger, which pleaſed them well, ſaying, he looks like a ſerviceable fellow to do kitchen

drudgery, run on errands, clean ſhoes, and do ſuch other things as the reſt of their ſervants think beneath them. By this he was confirmed in his place, and a flock bed prepared in the garret for him. Theſe conditions pleaſed him, and he ſhewed great diligence in the work, riſing early and ſitting up late, leaving nothing undone that he could do. But his being moſtly under the cook-maid, ſhe gave him ſour ſauce to theſe little ſweets; for ſhe being of a moroſe temper, uſed her authority beyond reaſon; ſo that to keep in the family, he had many a broken head, bearing it patiently; and the more he tried with good words to diſſuade her from her cruelty, the more ſhe inſulted him, and not only abuſed him, but frequently complained againſt him, endeavouring to get him turned out of his ſervice, but Mrs. Alice hearing of her uſuage, interpoſed in his favour, ſo that ſhe ſhould not prevail againſt him.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of his being troubled with Vermine in his Garret; of his buying a Cat to deſtroy them; and of his ſending her for a Venture Abroad.

THIS was not the only Miſery he ſuffered, for lying in a place for a long time unfrequented, ſuch abundance of Rats and Mice had bred there, that were almoſt as troubleſome by night, as the cook was by day, running over his face; and diſturbing him with their ſqueaking; ſo that he knew not what to think of his condition, or how to mend it. After many diſquieting thoughts, he at laſt comforted himſelf with the hopes that the Cook might ſoon marry or die, or quit her ſervice, and as for the Rats and Mice, a Cat would be an effectual remedy againſt them. Soon after a Merchant came to dinner, and it raining exceedingly, he ſtaid all night, whoſe ſhoes Whittington having cleaned, and preſented at his chamber-door, he gave him a penny. This ſtock he improved, for going along the ſtreet of an errand, he ſaw a woman with a cat under her arm; ſo he deſired to know the price of it? The women praiſed it for a good Mouſer, and told him Six-pence; but he declaring that a penny was all his ſtock, ſhe let him have it. This he brought home, and kept in a box all day, leſt the Cook ſhould kill her if ſhe came into the kitchen; and at Night to ſet her to work for her living. Puſs delivered him from one plague, but the other remained, though not for many years.

It was the Cuſtom with the worthy Merchant Mr. Hugh Fitz-Warren, that God might give him a greater bleſſing to his endeavours, to call all his ſervants together when he ſent out a ſhip, and cauſed every one to venture ſomething in it, to try their fortunes, for which they were to pay nothing for freight or cuſtom.

Now all but Whittington appeared and brought things according to their abilities, but Mrs. Alice being by, and ſuppoſing that poverty made him de-

cline coming, ſhe ordered him to be called, on which he made ſeveral excuſes; however being conſtrained to come, he fell upon his knees, deſiring them not to jeer a poor ſimple fellow in expectation that he was going to turn Merchant, ſince all that he could lay claim to as his own, was but a poor Cat,

which he had bought for one penny he had given him for cleaning ſhoes, which had much befriended him in keeping the Rats and Mice from him. Upon this Mrs. Alice proffered to lay ſomething down for him; but her father told her, The Cuſtom, it muſt be his own which he ventured, and order him to fetch his Cat, which he did, but with great reluctance, fancying nothing could come of it, and with ſome tears delivered her to the maſter of the ſhip, which was called the Unicorn, and was fell down to Blackwall, in order to proceed on her voyage.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of Whittington's Elopement on Allhallow's Day, and his Return on hearing Bow Bells ring; and of the Diſpoſal of the Cat by the Factor abroad.

THE Cook-Maid, who little thought how advantageous Whittington's Cat would prove, when ſhe did not ſcold at him, would jeer him about his grand adventure, and led him ſuch a life, that he grew weary of enduring it, and little expecting what enſued, reſolved rather to try Dame Fortune, than live in ſuch greatt orment. And ſo having packed up his bundle over night, got out early on Allhallow's day, intending to ramble the country. But as he went through Moorfields he began to have penſive thoughts, and his reſolutions began to fail; however, on he went to Holloway, and ſat down there to conſider of matter; when on a ſudden Bow Bells began to ring a merry peal. He liſtening, fancied they called him back from his intended Journey, and promiſed him the good fortune that afterwards befel him, imagining they expreſſed.

Turn again Whittington,
Lord Mayor of London.

This was a happy thought for him, as it made ſo great an impreſſion on him, that finding it early, and that he might be back before the family were ſtirring, he delayed not, and all things anſwered his expectation; for having left the door a-jar, he crept ſoftly in, and got to hisuſual drudgery.

During this time, the ſhip in which the Cat was, by contrary winds was driven on the coaſt of Barbary, inhabited by the Moors, unknown to the Engliſh; bu. finding the people courteous, the maſter and factor traded with them; ſo bringing their wares of ſundry ſorts upon the decks, aud opening them they pleaſed them ſo well, that the news was carried to the King, who ſent for patterns, with which he was ſo pleaſed, that he ſent for the factor to his palace. Their entertainmnt, according to cuſtom, was on the floor, covered with carpets, interwoven with gold and ſilver, croſs-legged. This kind of table was no ſooner covered with various diſhes, but the ſcent drew together a great number of Rats and Mice; who devoured all that came in the way; which ſurpriſed the factor, who aſked the Nobles, If theſe vermine were not offenſive? O, ſaid they, very much ſo, as his Majeſty would give half his revenue to be freed from them; for they are not only offenſive at his table, but his chamber and bed are ſo troubled with them, that he is always watched for fear of miſchief. The factor then remembering Whittington's Cat, and rejoicing at the occaſion, told them he had an Engliſh beaſt in the ſhip, which would rid all the Court of them quickly. The King overjoyed at hearing the good news, and being anxious to be freed from thoſe vermine, which ſo much ſpoiled his pleaſure, diſturbed his mind, and made all his enjoyments diſſatisfactory and burdenſome, deſired to ſee this ſurpriſing creature; ſaying, for ſuch a thing I will load your ſhip with Gold, diamonds, and pearls. This large offer made the Maſter endeavour the more to enhance the Cat's merits, ſaying, ſhe is the moſt admiral Creature in the world, and I cannot ſpare her, for ſhe keeps my

ſhip clear of them, otherwiſe they would deſtroy all my goods. But his Majeſty would take no denial, ſaying, No price ſhall price ſhall part us. The Cat being ſent for, and the tables being ſpread, the vermine came as before. Then ſetting her on the table, ſhe fell to it immediately, and killed and ſcattered them all in a trice; then ſhe came puring and curliug up her tail to the King and Queen, as if ſhe aſked a reward for her ſervice; whilſt they ad-

mired her, proteſting it was the fineſt diverſion they had ever ſeen.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Riches received for the Cat; the Unbelief of Whittington on their Arrival; and of his Liberality to ſome of his Fellow Servants.

THE Mooriſh King was ſo pleaſed with the Cat, eſpecially when the maſter told him ſhe was with young, and would ſtock the whole country, that he gave ten times more for the Cat than all the freight beſides. So they ſailed with a fair wind, and arrived ſafe at Blackwall, being the richeſt ſhip that

ever come into England. The maſter taking the cabinet of Jewels with him once more, they being too rich a prize to be left on board, and preſented

his bill of lading to Mr. Fitz-Warren, who praiſed God for ſuch a proſperous voyage. But when he called all his ſervants to give each their due, the maſter ſhewed him the Cabinet of Pearls and Jewels; the Sight of which much ſurpriſed him; but on being told it was all for Whittington's Cat, he ſaid, God forbid that I ſhould deprive him of one farthing of it; and ſo he ſent for him by the title of Mr. Whittington, who was then in the kitchen cleaning of pots and ſpits. Being told he muſt come to his maſter, he made ſeveral excuſes; but being urged to go, he at length came to the door, and there ſtood ſcringing and ſcraping, ſcrupling to enter, till the

Merchant commanded him in, and ordered a chair to be immediately ſet for him; on which he thinking they intended to make ſport with him, fell on his knees, and with tears in his eyes beſought them

not to mock a ſimple fellow, who meant none of them any harm. M.. Fitz-Warren, raiſing him up ſaid, Indeed, Mr. Whittington, we are ſerious with you, for in eſtate at this inſtant you are an abler man than myſelf, and then gave him the vaſt riches, which amounted to three hundred thouſand pounds, an immenſe ſum in thoſe days.

At length being perſuaded to believe, he fell upon his knees, and praiſed Almighty God, who hath vouchſafed to behold ſo poor a creature in the midſt of his miſery. Then turning to his maſter, he laid his riches at his feet; but he ſaid, No, Mr. Whittington, God forbid I ſhould take ſo much as a ducat from you, may it be a comfort to you. Then he turned to Mrs. Alice, but ſhe alſo refuſed it; upon which, bowing low, he ſaid unto her, Madam, whenever you pleaſe to make choice of a huſband I will make you the greateſt fortune in the world.

Upon this he began to diſtribute his bounty to his fellow ſervants, giving even his mortal enemy the Cook one hundred pounds for her portion; ſhe ſaying She was in her paſſion, he freely forgave her. He alſo diſtributed his bounty very plentifully to all he ſhip's Crew.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of Mr. Whittington's comely Perſon and Deportment; of Mrs. Alice's falling in Love with him, and marrying him; and of his being Sheriff of London.

UPON this change the haberdaſhers, taylors, and ſempſtreſſes, were ſet to work to make Mr. Whittington fine Cloaths, all things anſwerable to his fortune. Being dreſſed he appeared a very comely perſon, inſomuch that Mrs. Alice began to lay her eyes upon him. Now her father ſeeing this, intended a match for them, looking upon him to be a fortunate man. He alſo took him to the Royal Exchange, to ſee the Cuſtoms of the Merchants, where he was no ſooner known, but they came to welcome him into their ſociety. Soon after a match was propoſed between him and his maſter's daughter, when he excuſed himſelf on account of the meanneſs of his birth; but that objection being removed by his preſent worth, it was ſoon agreed on, and the Lord Mayor and Aldermen invited to the wedding.

After the honey-moon was over, his father-in-law aſked him what employment he would follow? whereupon he replied, He ſhould think of that of a Merchant. So they joined together in partnerſhip, and both grew immenſely rich.

Though Fortune had thus bountifully ſmiled on the ſubject of our hiſtory, he was far from proud, yet merry, which made his company and acquaintance courted by all; and in a ſhort time he was nominated Sheriff of London, in the year 1040, Sir John Haddle then being Lord Mayor.

CHAP. VIII.

Of his being thrice Lord Mayor, his Entertainment of Henry V. and his Death and Burial.

THUS he grew in riches and fame, being greatly beloved by all, especially the poor, whose hunger he always supplied.

In four years he was chosen Lord Mayor, in which office he behaved with such Justice and Prudence, that he was chose in the same office twice afterwards. In the same year he entertained King

Henry V. after his conqueſt of France, and his Queen at Guildhall, in ſuch a very grand manner, that he was pleaſed to ſay, Never Prince had ſuch a ſubject, and conferred upon him the honour of Knighthood. At this entertainment the King partieularly praiſed the fire, which was made of choice wood, mixed with mace, cinnamon, and all other ſpices; on which Sir Richard ſaid, he would endeavour to make one ſtill more agreeable to his Majeſty and immediately tore and threw into the fire the King's bond for 10,000 mark due to the company of Mercers, 2500 to the Chamber of London; 2000 to the Grocers; to the Merchants, Staplers, Goldſmiths, Haberdaſhers, Vintners, Brewers, and Bakers, 3000 marks each. All theſe, ſaid Sir Richard, with divers others, lent for the payment of your ſoldiers in France, I have taken in and diſcharged to the amout of 60,000l. ſterling; can your Majeſty deſire to ſee ſuch another Sight? The King and Nobles were ſtruck dumb with ſurpriſe at his wealth and liberality.

Sir Richard ſpent the reſt of his days honoured by the rich and beloved by the poor. He had by his wife two ſons and two daughters, ſome of whoſe poſterity are worthy citizens. He built many charitable houſes, alſo a church in Vintry Ward, dedicated to St. Michael, adding to it a college, founded to St. Mary, with a yearly allowance for the poor ſcholars; near which he erected an hoſpital called God's Houſe, and well endowed it. There he cauſed his father and mother-in-law to be buried and left room for himſelf and his wife, when death ſhould call them. He built Newgate, a place for criminals. He gave large ſums to Bartholomew hoſpital, and to many other charitable uſes.

Dame Alice his wife died in the ſixty-third year of her age, after which he would not marry, tho' he out-lived her near twenty years. In the concluſion he was buried in the place aforeſaid, leaving a good name to poſterity; and the follow epitaph was written on her tomb, and continued perfect till deſtroyed by the Fire of London.

Their EPITAPH.

HERE lies Sir Richard Whittington Thrice Mayor
And his dear Wife, a virtuous loving pair,
Him fortune rais'd to be belov'd and great
By the adventure only of a Cat,
Let none that read it of God's love deſpair,
Who truſts in him, he will of them take care;
But growing rich, chuſe humb eneſs not pride,
Let theſe dead virtuous perſons be your guide.

A SONG

A SONG

Sir Richard Whittington.

HERE I muſt tell the praiſe of worthy Whittington,
Known to be in his days Lord Mayor of London.
But of poor parents born was he, we hear,
And in his youth brought up in Somerſetſhire.
Poorly then up to London came this ſimple lad,
And with a merchant ſoon a dwelling had:
And in the kitchen plac'd, a ſcullion for to be,
And a long time he paſs'd in labour drudgingly.
His daily labour was turning ſpits at the fire,
To ſcour pots for a poor ſcullion's hire.
Meat and drink his pay, of coin he had no ſtore,
And to run away in ſecret thus he bore:
So from the merchant Whittington ſecretly,
Into the Country run to purchaſe liberty.
But as he went along in a fine ſummer's morn,
London bells ſweetly rung, Turn again Whittington
Ever more ſounding ſo, Turn again Whittington,
For thou in time ſhalt be Lord Mayor of London;
Whereupon back came Whittington with ſpeed,
A ſervant to remain, as the Lord had decreed.

no bleſſed be the bells, this was his daily ſong,
hat my good fortune tell; moſt ſweetly have
they rung.
f God ſo favours me, I will not be unkind,
ondon my love ſhall ſee, and my bounty find.
ut for this happy chance, this ſcullion had a Cat,
hat did his fame advance, and him wealth get.
hittington had no more than his poor Cat then,
hich to the ſhip he bore like a valiant man.
enturing the ſame, ſays he, I may get ſtore of gold
nd the Mayor of London be the bells have told,
hittington's merchandize carried upon the land,
roubled with rats and mice as we do underſtand.
he king who there reign'd, as he at dinner ſat,
ily in fear remain'd of many a mouſe and rat:
at that on trenchers lay, no way could they keep
ſafe,
t by rats torn away fearing no whip or ſtaff.
reupon they brought, heaps of gold given for that
me again they hie, with their ſhip laden ſo,
hittington's wealth by his Cat began to grow.
cullion's life he forſook, to be a merchant good,
d ſoon began to look how his credit ſtood.
er he was choſe Sheriff of the city we hear,
d then quickly roſe, as it doth appear.
the City's grace, Sir Richard Whittington,
me to be in his days thrice Lord Mayor of London
fame to advance, thouſands he lent the King,
maintain war in France, glory from thence to bring,
after a feaſt which he the king did make,
burnt the note in jeſt, and would no money take
oners cheriſhed were, Widows comfort found,
d deeds far and near by him were done,
ittington's College is one of his charities,
vgate he built, where many priſoner lies.

Many more deeds were done by Whittington,
Which joy and comfort bring to those who look on,
Somerset, thou hast bred the flower of charity,
Altho' he's dead and gone, yet he lives lastingly,
Call him back no more to live in London,
Those bells that call'd him back, Turn again
Whittington.

FINIS.